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[Northwestel abusing CRTC process: competitor](#)  
by Pierre Chauvin Friday February 24, 2017 »

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One of Northwestel's major competitors is unhappy the North's biggest telecom is challenging a CRTC ruling.

In November 2016 the CRTC ordered Northwestel to re-evaluate its wholesale internet rate.

On Feb. 6 Northwestel filed those new wholesale rates but also challenged one of the cost guidelines the CRTC asked it to use to calculate the rates. It filed a second set of rates calculated based on the assumption the CRTC would agree with its appeal.

But for Yellowknife-based SSI Micro, Northwestel is simply trying to further delay proceedings.

“SSI submits that Northwestel’s tactic of filing alternative rates ... is yet another attempt by that company to delay, obfuscate and muddy the waters,” the company said in its filing to the CRTC.

SSI’s chief development officer Dean Proctor said Northwestel’s challenge is “regulatory gaming.”

“You don’t appeal a decision before a decision is even made,” he told the News. “That for me is a blatant example of the kind of gaming and abuse of regulatory process that’s been going for years.”

Because Northwestel owns the only fibre optic lines that connect north and south, it’s obligated to offer wholesale bandwidth to would-be competitors.

Northwestel’s competitors have long argued the company is keeping a monopoly on the territory’s internet by effectively pricing them out.

At its current rates, it would cost an internet service provider \$5,824 per month to have 100 Megabits per second (Mbps) of bandwidth to resell in a city like Whitehorse.

According to the rates Northwestel filed using the CRTC guidelines, the cost would be about \$2,019 per month for the same package — about 2.8 times cheaper than the current rates. With the alternate rates Northwestel filed, it would cost \$3,399 per month.

A 400 Mbps package for Whitehorse would cost \$5,869 per month under the CRTC-mandated rates, and \$11,357 under Northwestel’s alternate rates.



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Proctor said SSI asked the CRTC to make Northwestel’s CRTC-mandated rates interim until a final decision is made.

The CRTC has to rule on Northwestel’s challenge and whether it accepts the way the company calculated its rates.

For its part, Northwestel denies any attempt to delay the proceedings.

Spokesperson Andrew Anderson told the News the challenge of one of the CRTC guidelines Northwestel filed was “standard, common and an important part of the regulatory process.”

Northwestel filed all the documents the CRTC needed to make a decision, he said, and the process won’t be delayed.

“From our perspective the process is proceeding as it should,” he said. “We’re not going to focus on slinging unfounded accusations through the media.”

Intervenors have until March 6 to file comments about Northwestel’s new rates.

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